

# FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS

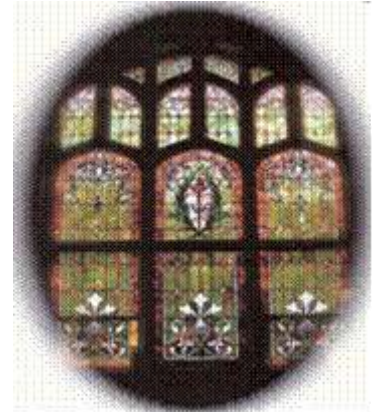


Photo by Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, 2015

*Newsletter of the  
First  
Unitarian  
Church*

*Alton, Illinois*

[www.firstuualton.org](http://www.firstuualton.org)



Rev. Dawn Fortune

## Sunday Worship 10:00 A.M. The Theme for April is Nature

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

**Sabrina Trupia – "What the Earth knows about"**

Worship Associate: Robin Crane

First Sunday Potluck!

**April 9<sup>th</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

**Sayer & Sharona Johnson – "Roll with the Changes"**

Worship Associate: Mary Johnson

Sharona and Sayer Johnson reflect creatively on transition and love. How our journeys interlock and change and merge. Change is inevitable how we react and engage in change is how we manifest love.

**April 16<sup>th</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

**Rev. Dawn Fortune**

Worship Associate: Kayci Combs-Lueker

**April 23<sup>rd</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

**Wayne Politsch**

Worship Associate: Joy Hoefl

Musical Guest: John Herndon



**April 30<sup>th</sup> 10:00 A.M.**

**Rev. Dawn Fortune**

Worship Associate: Dorothy Wilson

**Stewardship Canvass ends  
Lunch Party**



**Growth**

**The Seekers**

**Every Sunday, 11:15 in the Emerson Room,** We'll engage in a more in-depth discussion of that day's sermon and the monthly topic. Everyone is welcome to join in. It's a great way to get to know your fellow congregants and to get a deeper understanding of the lessons we are learning.

**Ministerial Search Committee Update**

Ministerial Search Update: The search continues! We are in that awkward "wait and see" phase of the process. There is not a lot to report, but we remain hopeful that the right person will come our way. Feel free to reach out to any of us with questions or concerns. We value your feedback!



~Tracey Howe-Koch, MSC Chair



## FROM THE PREZ

By the time you read this, spring will be officially here and I will have a new knee. Please feel free to contact me by

phone or e-mail while I am learning to use the new knee. I may be in physical therapy but I will return calls and e-mails. I hope to return to church during April.

April is our fund raising month. Our members want to know what it cost to run our church. So, a proposed budget will be passed out at church during April. This budget is based on the actual expenses that it costs to run our church. Becky, our Administrator, spent countless hours going through our actual expenses so that our budget is based on reality of what we actually spent in the last fiscal year. Added to it will be things we need that were stricken from the current budget last year when we did not get enough in pledges to support them. Examples would be funds for RE or building repairs. Also included will be expenses that have increased that we cannot cut from the budget (as insurance). This budget is NOT FLUFF. It is the bare essentials we need to run this church. Please study it.

I miss having a choir. So do others because I was asked numerous times if we will ever have a choir again. That is not under board responsibilities, so I consulted Reverend Dawn. Dawn suggested forming a group of people that want to sing as an interest group. The group could decide how many times a month they wanted to meet as a group and how often they want to sing. The group could decide to sing once a month, every other month, once a quarter, or whatever. Subsequently, (let's say during a monthly or quarterly meeting), the group would select the music they want to sing, get assurance from the minister that it is appropriate, then e-mail the music to Nicole if you wanted her to play it, practice, and sing. It would be great to have a choir again.

While we are on the topic of small groups, an idea was floating around that we have a story telling group(s). Each person would tell their own story and by doing so, group members would get to know each other better. Anyone interested in forming a storytelling group, please consult with Reverend Dawn and proceed from there.

Want to give more to your church but not spend an extra penny doing so? While working on our expenses and income, Becky took a look at what we get from those who

use the "My Schnucks' Card." We can increase that if every member got one. We get about \$500 a year. Can we raise that to \$1,000? Ask at the register for a "My Schnucks Card," following the instructions on the card, go on-line and designate First UU as your charity.

Happy Spring,  
Dee

---

## Community Lenten Services



Once again our church is participating in the Alton Community Wednesday Lenten Services organized by Church Women United. The last service in this Lenten season will be on Friday, April 13. All the worship services begin at 12:00 noon followed by a lunch at 12:30 put on by the host church. The cost for the lunch is \$5.00 per person, and a free-will offering is also taken to be divided between the Oasis Women's Shelter and the Crisis Food Center.

The host church keeps the \$5.00 per person fee to use as it sees fit – usually to pay for the food provided for the luncheon.

**On Wednesday, April 5,** at noon, the Rev. David Goins, pastor of Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church, will be preaching at our church. We will be responsible for doing a soup, sandwich, and dessert lunch for perhaps 50 people. Volunteers will be needed for a variety of tasks.

**On Good Friday, April 14,** at noon, Rev. Dawn will be preaching at the Greater St. James Baptist Church, 2016 Belle St. in Alton. Dawn would probably like to see some familiar faces in the audience.



The Alton Area Cluster of the United Congregations of Metro East (UCM) will be holding a "Prayer Breakfast" on Saturday, April 29 at Main St. United Methodist Church in Alton. At the breakfast there will be a speaker sharing information about the new Policing Initiative in Alton, as well as individuals telling about the several social justice initiatives of UCM. The door open at 8:00 a.m. with the program from 8:30 to 9:30. The breakfast is free, but there will be an opportunity for those who wish, to make a financial donation / commitment to support the ongoing work of UCM. If you plan to attend, RSVP to Mary Johnson ([mejohanson@mindspring.com](mailto:mejohanson@mindspring.com)) by April 22.

**Dear Fellow Members,**

Like many things in spring, April marks the start of our annual stewardship drive which represents a new beginning for the coming church year.



This is a time when we as a community begin to plan financially for the year to come. This year, I will be working closely with our president Dee Evans, Sandy Shaner and Reverend Dawn with the goal of making the financial needs of our church as transparent as possible.

Stewardship is defined as the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth preserving. Since we are church that is run by its members, we also have a shared duty to serve as its rewards.

Over the coming month, everyone must consider this responsibility in order to provide for the stability and wellbeing of our church home.

---

**Congregational Covenant**

Approved May 17, 2015

**To strengthen and nurture with love, compassion and respect, we covenant to:**

**Honor** and make space for our diversity, respect our volunteers, leaders and staff by Supporting balance in their lives and in their personal and professional pursuits;



**Encourage** each member to develop a personal spiritual practice that cultivates honesty and acceptance;

**Remembering** our humanness we acknowledge our imperfection and extend forgiveness to ourselves and others;

**Engage** within our own and larger community with integrity, by taking responsibility for our actions, facilitating right relationships, and living into the Journey.

(The acronym for our Covenant is [HERE](#))

**Summary of Board Meeting  
March 16, 2017**



**Web Site:** Paul Hebert has found that we have already paid iPower as our server for the next two years and we cannot get a refund, so we will stay with them for now. The site is free of

viruses for now, the site appears to be more modern looking than most others in our area. We are still interested in the possibility of accepting on-line contributions on our site. Thanks to Paul Hebert, Jerry Johnson, Debby Lovell, and Mike Schmidt for their work in this area. Most visitors tell us that they have looked at our site before deciding to attend.

**Ministerial Search:** The search team should know by April how many candidates they will have for screening.

**Stewardship and Treasurer’s Report:** The finance team is working on a budget for presentation during the pledge campaign in April. The board has looked at a draft budget and made some suggested changes. Mike Schmidt and his team will be launching the pledge campaign in April. Be prepared to make a promise to show how much this community means to you by making a pledge. Think about what you can afford (hurts a little but you can do it). Be prepared to make a commitment to sustain and grow the mission of the church.

**On-line Banking:** Liberty Bank does allow automatic withdrawal from your checking, so this option will soon be available to members. It may also be possible to pay pledges to credit cards through the UUA.

**Endowment Fund:** The Board is hoping to add a couple more members to join Jerry Johnson on this committee.

**Policies and Procedures:** Sandy Shaner presented a list of FAQ’s for nursery workers, which the Board reviewed and suggested a few changes. Also, the Policy on Building Use was presented and will get a few suggested revisions. The Board will vote on revised Policies and they will be included in our Policy and Procedures Handbook. Also, we will be looking at job descriptions from the by-laws, with the idea of revising and moving them to the Policy Handbook.

**The next Board Meeting is April 27 at 7:00 pm.** Anyone is welcome to attend. Contact President Dee Evans ahead of time if you have business you would like added to the agenda.

Submitted by Pat Moore, Board Secretary



## Easter Egg / Scavenger Hunt After Service, April 16th

### Religious Education for Children and Youth News

Last day of RE classes is May 21<sup>st</sup>. Until then, children's RE is continuing with the UU SuperHeroes Bible People as well as adding some lessons from the UU Famous People for Elementary.

The Youth Group will be continuing with the Popcorn Theology curriculum where we will be watching excerpts from movies such as Fields of Dreams, Oh God!, Little Buddha, Spiderman, Life of PI, Jesus Christ Superstar, Evan Almighty, Jurassic Park, and Gandhi. Each movie is associated with a life theme where afterwards lively discussion questions as well as associated activities promote thinking and expressing their values, views, and how our UU faith fits in to our life. There is also lots of laughter, popcorn and soda.

Volunteers are always needed! Jennifer Lewis and Joy Hoeft have already done the planning and sourcing, all we need is a few good people to spend an hour reading to or playing with some great kids! And we know that a strong children's RE is important to attract and keep families coming back. Please see Jennifer Lewis or Joy Hoeft to offer to help, even if just one time.

Unfortunately, due to too few volunteers right now, we can't staff RE on the first Sunday of each month. We encourage the children and Youth Group to attend church these Sundays when there are no classes.

If you have any questions or comments about RE, please contact Joy Hoeft, [kjabhoeft@gmail.com](mailto:kjabhoeft@gmail.com).

---

### Baby and Child Dedication - June 4<sup>th</sup>



As part of the Sunday service on June 4, Rev. Dawn will be dedicating babies and children. If you have a child you would like to have dedicated on that day, please contact Rev. Dawn

at [revdawnfortune@gmail.com](mailto:revdawnfortune@gmail.com) or 314-399-1023.

### Introducing Two New Members

Please make welcome **Carol and Pedro McGrew**. You probably already know both. Carol is already an active volunteer. She quickly stepped up when we needed an extra hand in the nursery. And Pedro, her very cute, very sweet therapy dog, is certainly hard to miss.



Carol is a single mom, living with her son, his girlfriend, her disabled sister and many pets. She is definitely a pet lover. She does volunteer work at the RiverBend Pet Food Pantry and her non-human family includes dogs, cats, a gecko, a ball python and a catfish.

Carol is originally from California but moved to the area in 1990. She attended the Universal Technical Institute, Phoenix, Arizona and has an Associate's degree in Automotive and Diesel Technology. Her hobbies include jewelry making, candle making, cross stitch and coloring.

When I asked Carol how she found us, she replied that her therapist at Chestnut Health Systems suggested she join a church. But Carol was wary of traditional churches. So the therapist suggested UU churches where she would find other Free Thinkers! (How true!) Carol said she first came on Christmas Eve service and she and Pedro immediately felt very much at home. We are so lucky that Carol and Pedro found us. --

*Mary W.*

---

## Don't Forget!

# TRIVIA Night

**Saturday, April 22nd**

**Only \$10 per person**

**Doors open at 6: game begins at 6:30**

**Family Friendly- Child Care available**

# CHURCH LEADERSHIP 2016 - 2017

## Board of Trustees

**Board President-** Dee Evans  
**President-Elect-** Michael Schmidt  
**Past President-** Debby Lovell  
**Treasurer-** Lisa Strangeman  
**Secretary-** Pat Moore  
**At-Large-** Robin Crane  
**At-Large-** Paul Hebert

## Committee/Team Leads

**Transitions Committee -** TBA  
**Social Events-** Vacant  
**Interfaith and U.U.-** Vacant

## Pastoral Associates

Marcia Custer  
Sandra Shaner

## Religious Education Council

**Chair-**Joy Hoeft

## Stewardship Committee

**Building-** Kelly Crone-Willis  
**Grounds-** Robyn Stranquist  
**Canvass 2017-** TBA  
**Endowment Fund-** Kelly Crone-Willis  
**Finance-** Matt Koch  
**Membership-** Mary Weber  
**Sunday Support Ministries-** TBA

## Worship Associates

Mary Johnson  
Robin Crane  
Kayci Combs-Lueker  
Joy Hoeft  
Robert Kokenyesi  
Dorothy Wilson

---

## **First Sunday Pot Luck Luncheon** **Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 11:15 am**

Come, enjoy good food and fellowship with your UU church community!

**All are welcome!**



## **4th Saturday Personal Care Item Distribution Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 11 A.M**



As this newsletter goes to press, the March personal care event hasn't happened as yet, so we don't have a tally of the exact items given or how many guests we had. However, we know from experience that toilet paper, detergent, baby wipes, shaving cream, African American hair products, liquid dish soap, laundry detergent, deodorant, shampoo, diapers, etc., etc. were donated, organized and distributed to our neighbors so that their lives are a little easier. We also had some food and drinks for everyone. A big "thank you" to all who donated and to those who did the work.

There is a bin at the bottom of the stairs for you to put your donations or find someone to carry them down for you. The Dollar Tree stores are a great place to purchase items needed for this community service activity of the church.

**Items Needed for April event  
will be announced at a later date**



**Non-perishable foods items are always needed to contribute to the Alton Crisis Food Pantry. It's important to help our neighbors get the food they need.**

---

## **Wash, Dry and Put Away!**

Enjoy some coffee and cookies with your conversation after church? Thank you for being sure our dishes are taken care of and trash removed. Keeping our church home clean and comfortable is everyone's job.



---

## **Is It Your Turn?**



## INTEREST GROUPS:



### **Anna Ds – Women's Alliance, April 6<sup>th</sup> 11:30 a.m.**

With the threat of snow passed, it's time to get back to our rotating locations. Last

Thursday at our last winter lunch, we talked about where we would like to go beginning in April (and United Methodist Village, Meridian Village, Maryville Winery, Fazzi's were quick suggestions). The result of that conversation was that I checked with Lorelei about options at United Methodist Village and Ginger checked with the folks at Meridian Village.

Based on those conversations, we'll be at Evergreen Restaurant at Meridian Village at 11:30 on April 6. A table for 14 has been reserved and, as you may remember, payment is by cash only and there is no tipping. The address is 101 Evergreen Lane, Glen Carbon, and the main phone number for the Village is 288-3700. Please email Ginger at [jmvk60@att.net](mailto:jmvk60@att.net) by Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Then you may want to mark your calendar for May 4 when we'll meet at United Methodist Village. I'll send out a reminder before that meeting so no need to worry about details just yet.

### **Fellow Book Lovers! Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. In the Wuerker Room**



Join us for a lively discussion of "The Tribe" by Sebastian Junger  
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/05/29/books/review/sebastian-jungers-tribe.html>  
If you are interested, please contact Nancy Conniff or Phil Embree.

## **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**



**Newsletter Deadline is on the 15 of each month. Send info. to Dorothy Wilson [djjccw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:djjccw@sbcglobal.net) and to Becky Green at church [church@firstuualton.org](mailto:church@firstuualton.org)**



### **Men's Monthly Lunch April 13th, 11:30 a.m.**

The men's lunch bunch (Retired old Men Eating Out) meets on the second Thursday of each month. Join us at the Best Buffet at 615 Wesley Dr. in Wood River. All men in our church are invited (retired or working, old, or not). For further information contact Paul Herbert [pphebert@mail.com](mailto:pphebert@mail.com)

### **Healing Energy Meditation**

**April 10<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 p.m. by the Fireplace**



Fellowship and a couple hours of peaceful presence – sound good? Join us in our journey to the center of ourselves.

Would you like to learn how to meditate? Or just curious? We are in the early stages of planning a meditation class! "Church This Week" will have all the details once the event has been finalized.

### **Alton Area Cluster Book Group**

The Alton Area Cluster Book Group continues its reading of "Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race" by Debby Irving. The Group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month from 3 to 5 p.m. at the church. You do not need to have read the book or have your own copy of the book as we read the book aloud, passing copies around, and stopping often to discuss a point or topic. The next gathering will be on **Thursday, April 20th**. If you are interested in attending, or getting on the group email list, contact Mary Johnson. [mejohanson@mindspring.com](mailto:mejohanson@mindspring.com)



### **Alton Area Cluster Meeting Monday, April 24 - 7:00 p.m.**

The Alton Area Cluster will have its regular monthly meeting at 7 p.m. at our church on Monday, April 24. Anyone may attend these meetings and learn more about Cluster activities and projects.